

Remarks

In response to the Final Office Action dated March 15, 2007, the Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration based on the above claim amendments and the following remarks. It is respectfully submitted that entry of the above amendments is proper under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 in that the amendments (1) place the claims in condition for allowance or, if necessary, in better condition for consideration on appeal; and (2) do not raise any new issues requiring further consideration or search. For the reasons given above, entry of the above claim amendments under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 is respectfully requested.

Claims 2, 4-9, 13-14, 16-17, 19, 21, and 24-25 have been amended and claims 1, 15, 20, and 22-23 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 4, 19, and 21 have been rewritten in independent form including at least all of the features specified in cancelled base claims 1, 15, and 20 and all intervening claims. The remaining claims have been amended to correct various references to dependent claims which were changed as a result of the aforementioned amendments to claims 4, 19, and 21. It should be noted that the above-described claim amendments were discussed with the Examiner in a telephonic interview on April 23, 2007. It is respectfully submitted that the above-described claim amendments should reasonably have been expected by the Examiner and thus do not raise new issues requiring further consideration and/or search. No new matter has been added.

Claims 1-25 are pending in the application. In the Office Action, claims 1, 15, and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Karp et al. (US 6,154,727) in view of Elliot (US 6,243,039) and Suarez et al. (US 6,298,306). Claims 2-14, 16-19, and 21-25 are objected to but are indicated as being allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Applicant's Statement of the Substance of the Interview

A brief telephonic interview between Applicant's representative Alton Hornsby III (Registration No. 47,299) and the Examiner was held on April 23, 2007 to discuss the rejection of independent claims 1, 15, and 20 in view of the cited references of record and further to discuss the cancellation of the aforementioned independent claims, the rewriting of allowable dependent claims 4, 19, and 21 in independent form, and the rewriting of the remaining claims to depend from rewritten claims 4, 19, and 21. The Examiner indicated that he would enter the aforementioned claim amendments if filed in an after-final amendment as long as no new matter was added or existing intermediate claim dependencies were not altered.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. §103

In the Office Action, claims 4, 19, and 21 were indicated as allowable over the cited art of record upon being rewritten in independent for including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. The aforementioned claims have been rewritten to comply with the Examiner's suggestion. Therefore, these claims are allowable. As noted in the remarks above, pending claims 1, 15, 20, and 22-23 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. The remaining pending claims 2, 5-9, 13-14, 16-17, and 24-25 all depend from one of claims 4, 19, and 21 and thus recite at least the same features. Therefore, these claims are also allowable and the rejection of these claims should be withdrawn.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, this application is now in condition for allowance. A notice to this effect is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes, after this amendment, that the application is not in condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to call the Applicant's attorney at the number listed below.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account 13-2725.

Respectfully submitted,

MERCHANT & GOULD P.C.
P.O. Box 2903
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402-0903
(404) 954-5100

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/Alton Hornsby III/
Alton Hornsby III
Reg. No. 47,299

